

Czechoslovakia 1968: The Class Character of the Events

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Editor's Introduction

In this booklet...

This booklet is a compilation of editorials and articles that appeared in *Workers World*, including four analytical pieces and a postscript by Sam Marcy, chairman of Workers World Party.

It will be of some interest to the reader that the date of each article is given, beginning with March 15, 1968.

The Warsaw Pact intervention, about which there is so much confusion in some progressive circles, took place on August 21, 1968. The articles appearing before that date do not raise the question of intervention, but deal directly with the question of growing counter-revolution in Czechoslovakia.

I

Before the Warsaw Pact intervention

The trend in Czechoslovakia

MARCH 15, 1968 -- More than 20 years ago the revolutionary workers, peasants and village poor of Czechoslovakia took destiny in their own hands and completed the overthrow of the rule of the landlords, bankers and industrialists who had plundered the Czech people for centuries and even sold them to foreign imperialists -- first of the Western democratic type and later of the Nazi type.

The seizure of power by the Czech people was a momentous event in world history. It shook the imperialist world to its foundations and encouraged the revolutionary peoples elsewhere to do the same. No wonder the Czech people earned the enmity of the world bourgeoisie particularly the U.S. It need only be remembered that the establishment of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (CSR) was given as the principal reason by the Truman Administration for the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a move calculated to stem the revolutionary tide in Europe and lay the groundwork for aggressive domination and war all over the world.

It should also be remembered that the U.S. thereafter put a tight economic boycott around Czechoslovakia, seized its foreign assets and began a campaign of internal subversion and external pressure the like of which had not been seen during a period of "peace."

The establishment of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic brought phenomenal social and economic gains, particularly to the workers. It ushered in a period of economic and industrial development which took place at an unprecedented tempo and increased the standard of living of the masses of people to heights undreamed of during the reign of the capitalist class.

The 20th Congress (1956) of the Soviet Communist Party ushered in a new period of reaction, which revived the remnants of the old ruling classes in Eastern Europe as well as the neo-bourgeois restorationist elements in the Soviet Union. This Congress, among whose leaders was Nikita Khrushchev, took advantage of the grave and serious errors made by Stalin during many years and ushered in a new period of revisionism in nearly all fields of Soviet life.

This soon found an echo in the newly established Peoples' governments in Eastern Europe where remnants of the older ruling class still maintained a clandestine existence and were constantly nourished by their strong economic and social connections with the Western bourgeoisie. The counter-revolutionary uprisings in 1956 in Hungary and Poland were the logical outcome of the reactionary impetus given by the 20th Congress.

The Congress set in motion a series of changes to the right, particularly in the economic system of Eastern Europe, which, even though checked from time to time, is still moving toward the abyss of bourgeois restoration.

The latest events in Czechoslovakia constitute a renewed leap in the same direction. The Wall Street government, which was so hostile to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic when it was first set up and did everything to strangle it, is practically delirious with joy at the new trend in Czechoslovakia.

Said the *New York Times* in a prominent editorial on March 12:

The United States could greatly help the present positive evolution in Czechoslovakia by extending to her the long overdue privilege of receiving the most-favored-nation treatment in respect to tariffs. Furthermore, the United States has blocked the return to Czechoslovakia of the gold reserves of the prewar period Prague Government. (That is, the capitalist regime-Ed.)... Their return would be a telling symbol of American good will. ..."

The *New York Times* forgot to mention that it applauded the blocking of the gold reserves and similar moves when they were proposed by Secretary of State Dean Acheson.

There are those who say that all is lost in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. No, we don't think so. Such an analysis is faulty and premature. The basic conquests of the revolutions, such as the collectivized and nationalized property and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie are still a giant fact of life. And while the planned economy has been damaged and hurt by revisionist leadership, it can be disregarded by revolutionary Marxists only at their peril.

Finally, it should be noted that the recent reactionary upheavals in Eastern Europe come at a time of world-wide revolutionary onslaught against imperialism, an onslaught that gives renewed courage and confidence to millions in the West. Imperialism's efforts in Vietnam and elsewhere are crumbling. The fortunes of imperialism are declining. From one end of the globe to the other, imperialism is becoming more discredited and incapable of attracting new people to its banner.

The present international situation is favorable to revolutionary struggle for socialism and unfavorable for a lasting tenure for the ugly reaction raising its head in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere.

Neither democratic, socialist, nor revolutionary

MAY 23 1968 -- The "democratic socialist revolution" in Czechoslovakia is in reality counter-revolutionary, anti-socialist and not very democratic, except insofar as right-wing

critics of the regime are getting more and more freedom to sound off on behalf of capitalism and imperialism.

In an internationally publicized press conference on May 14, Deputy Premier Ota Sik told reporters that Czechoslovakia would accept Western capital for industrial "joint ventures" with state enterprises, and that it would be up to each state enterprise to negotiate with the capitalist companies.

This almost amounts to giving up the state monopoly of foreign trade and undermining socialized property altogether. Wherever foreign capitalist production is more efficient, due to greater wealth, machinery and more intensive exploitation, its product will compete directly with the socialist product and socialist labor will be indirectly exploited by Western capital.

Inviting private capital from the West does not in and of itself destroy socialism. But under conditions of decentralizing the economy, establishing more and more friendly relations with capitalist countries and individual capitalists, permitting these capitalists to negotiate separately with the individual factories and factory combines, it certainly tends to batter down the socialist economy.

The Czechoslovak government also announced flatly that it would cooperate economically with the West, break away from the economic pattern of the socialist bloc and try to make its currency convertible with the dollar instead of the ruble.

Politically, the new Czechoslovak leadership has made it clear that it wants more conciliation with the West, that it opposes even the mild Soviet support for the oppressed Arabs and sides with the U.S. satellite, Israel, in the Mideast. It wants to be friends with the Pope; it rehabilitates Czech imperialist politicians as national heroes; it idolizes U.S. hegemony at the very moment most of the world wants to overthrow it.

Whatever slight opposition these leaders may express to U.S. intervention in Vietnam, the whole logic of their position is to sabotage the revolutionary struggle of the Vietnamese people. They have already made clear that they oppose the "old course" of sending material aid to countries fighting for their liberation.

They, like the revisionists in the Soviet Union whom they have sociologically outstripped, want "the good life." Instead of helping the oppressed abroad, they are going to concentrate on exploiting the workers at home to get this "good life."

The Czechoslovak workers, who are scheduled to be speeded up where they are not actually laid off (so this bunch of parasites can have more "consumer products"), have not yet been heard from.

It is possible that due to bureaucratic treatment of them in the past, they may be confused and temporarily accept the "new nationalism" as a genuine form of socialist autonomy, rather than the neo-capitalist restorationism it really is.

But in any case, it is not the workers who are talking about "democracy." It is not workers' democracy the new leadership is talking about. And it is not the workers who are forming Catholic and pro-capitalist political parties; it is their would-be bosses and exploiters.

It is important to emphasize that the neo-bourgeois restorationist stratum has been nourished for many years under the wing of privileged bureaucrats who should have been ousted by the workers long ago. If some of the bureaucrats, compromised by past crimes, are unwilling or unable to call upon the workers, they may try to adjust themselves to the growing counter-revolution. Others may succeed in linking themselves to the workers in a genuine struggle against the revival of capitalism. But it is not necessary for us to have to delineate the complete pattern of events.

Czechoslovakia, like Vietnam, the U.S., France and Germany, is part of the world. And the great revolutionary events in the world are driving in quite another direction than the Czechoslovak "liberals," the petty-bourgeois orphans of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, seem to imagine. These "democrats" are really gambling on the definitive victory of the imperialist United States, just as the imperialist Czech bourgeoisie in 1938 gambled on the victory of Hitler.

They are gambling, not just against the power of the Soviet ruble (in favor of the tottering dollar) but against the strength of awakening mankind and the sweep of world revolution.

Revisionism vs. capitalist restoration in Czechoslovakia

JULY 18, 1968 -- Restoration of capitalism in Czechoslovakia would seriously alter the world political situation in favor of imperialism. And that is why the U.S. imperialists are so overjoyed at developments in that country today.

To name only one consequence: the material aid that Czechoslovakia is sending Vietnam, Cuba, Tanzania, Egypt, north Korea, etc., would be stopped completely if capitalism were to be restored. In fact, if the "reformers" had their way, they would stop the foreign aid to the oppressed right away.

The first and most basic thing to understand about the present Czechoslovak government, therefore, is that it is a centrist government half way between outright capitalist restoration and revisionism, perhaps more than half way -- and that the situation is extremely tense.

Alexander Dubcek, the centrist who replaced revisionist Novotny, has sworn to maintain nationalized property, resist capitalist restoration and not allow the liquidation of working class rule. But he has already proposed measures leading to the liquidation of the socialist monopoly of foreign trade and presided over "reforms" obviously designed to enrich the already privileged layer of administrative and technical elements. And now he refuses to

attend a meeting of leaders of Warsaw Pact countries, leading to speculation that he wants to withdraw from the Pact itself.

His "socialist" speeches, therefore, have a peculiar ring. They make him resemble the farmer's daughter who took her sheep to the butcher and tearfully made him promise not to hurt it. Under cover of all the talk about "democracy" and "socialist reforms," etc., the main push is to the right, and has reached very close to the border of actual restoration. That is how it looks to us from this side of the Atlantic.

II

Czech leaders open door to counter-revolution

Some hard facts about Czechoslovak "reform"

*Aim is to dismantle socialist economy,
turn to West: fruits of Soviet revisionism.*

By Sam Marcy

JULY 31, 1968 -- This article is being written while the talks between the Soviet and Czech leaders are still in progress. Regardless of the outcome of these talks, it is plain that a counter-revolutionary turning point in Czechoslovakia has been reached. Only the speedy and determined intervention of the Czechoslovak working class can reverse this process. Unfortunately, this seems to be very unlikely at the present because the very leadership presently at the head of the workers has done most to accelerate the process of bourgeois restoration in Czechoslovakia. This took root a long time ago.

It was the January meeting of the Czechoslovak CP leadership that brought everything to a head. Very little has come out in the way of detail of what happened at the meeting except that Novotny, himself a moderate revisionist, was replaced by Dubcek, a more extreme revisionist.

At first it seemed only a change in degree, a substituting for an old-line revisionist one that would take one or two more steps in the process of bourgeois restoration. What happened since January, however, is that a virtual political counter-revolution seems to have culminated which goes far beyond almost anything seen in Eastern Europe, with the possible

exception of Yugoslavia. If matters continue the way they are proceeding right now, Czechoslovakia may move farther in the direction of capitalist restoration than even Yugoslavia.

Under the mask of "liberalization" and "democratization," the Dubcek leadership has taken giant steps to dismantle the socialist basis of the economy, has widened and deepened the capitalist "free market" in the country, has indiscriminately generalized material incentives to the upper, privileged layers of the population and has in effect substituted bourgeois economic methods of distributing national income for what were strong socialist economic beginnings. The capitalist market is now to be the **primary** lever in running the economy and the socialization of industry and centralized planning is to be subordinated to it if not abolished. This is not said in so many words, but that is the direction in which events are moving, and they are moving fast.

'Experiment' a cover-up for restoration

Much of this has to be covered up by assurances that it is "only an experiment," that the new leaders are merely "innovating," that they are trying "creative methods," trying to use imagination instead of sticking to old dogma and so on and so forth. But this is merely a cover-up to transform the basic features of the economic system.

The Cubans too are interested in imaginative ideas, in new methods, and in discarding old dogmas which hinder the development of socialist construction and release the creative energies of the masses. So are the north Koreans, the Vietnamese, the Albanians, the Chinese and the East Germans. It is strange that the world bourgeoisie should not praise them and welcome them with open arms the way they do the Czechoslovaks.

True, there is still public ownership of the basic means of production in Czechoslovakia. But all or almost all of the political power is now in the hands of a **bourgeois** intelligentsia which is bent on dismantling the whole system built by the working class since 1948, when power was seized from the bourgeoisie.

Not only are almost all the organs of political power strongly oriented toward the Western type of capitalist economy, but they are in constant and irreconcilable struggle with the socialized sector of the economy -- that is, with the basic industries such as steel, iron, power generating, chemical and engineering industries, which are still legally owned by the state and were developed by the sweat and blood of the workers into the strongest pillars of a socialized economy.

However, the whole struggle of the bourgeois intelligentsia, especially the technical intelligentsia, is to sabotage the further socialist growth and development of the basic means of production and to slowly dismantle them, fragment by fragment, using one deceptive device after another to fool the workers. The complaints of the so-called reformers that they have to return to capitalist free enterprise in order to reverse the disproportion between heavy industry and light (consumer) industry is nonsense. The entire Western bourgeoisie would not have become cheerleader to the Dubcek regime on that account alone.

What caused the economic crisis?

This has inevitably brought on an acute economic crisis. Nothing has so vividly and graphically pointed up the character of the crisis as the admission by the new regime on July 26th that the country faces a "**grave economic disequilibrium**" (*New York Times*, July 28, 1968). This is a fancy word for a full-scale economic crisis.

What is the cause of the so-called "**economic disequilibrium**?" The cause lies squarely in the efforts of the bourgeois intelligentsia and its political tool, the Dubcek leadership, to wreck the socialized economy. Having done it only half-way has created confusion and chaos, but has not hidden the hand of the saboteurs.

The cause of the "**economic disequilibrium**," as they call it, is utterly unlike any of the economic crises which plague the Western capitalist system. These, as is well known, are caused by overproduction due to private ownership of the means of production, and producing for private profit in a blind market rather than public need. The economic crisis in Czechoslovakia which the new leadership was forced to admit exists is an artificial one, a so-called "man made" economic crisis, a crisis which does not grow out of the automatic processes inherent in the system, as is the case in a capitalist economy, but an economic crisis that has its roots in a gradual take-over by the bourgeois intelligentsia and in their attempt to re-orient the economy to bourgeois market relations.

Just as a workers' government after it seizes power encounters great difficulties in re-orienting toward a socialist economy, in the same way the new restorationist leadership in Prague is facing an economic crisis in attempting the economic transition from socialism to capitalism.

The difference is, however, that while the difficulties experienced in the formation of a socialist system are mere birth pangs, the transformation of an incipient socialist system into a capitalist system means an eventual return to economic chaos and imperialist enslavement.

It is no wonder then that the Dubcek regime was forced to admit in the official economic report for the first six months of 1968 that the rate of economic growth during the past half year, that is, the half year that began with his January political coup at the Central Committee meeting, was slower than either the entire year of 1967 or 1966. And that probably is a gross understatement! 1966. And that probably is a gross understatement!

The economic report also admits the "existence of strong inflationary pressures" and that "many consumer goods are entirely unavailable." Even while the Dubcek leadership was meeting with the Soviet leaders, the economic ministry was forced to announce price increases on consumer goods. The economic situation created by the mismanagement of the new governing group must indeed be critical if they had to announce it at this particular moment.

The economic chaos caused by the swiftly developing political counter-revolution has put in total jeopardy the basic gains of socialist construction in Czechoslovakia.

There is no freedom for genuine revolutionaries to sound the alarm and arouse the workers through the public press of Czechoslovakia. Nor is there any room in the press of Czechoslovakia to expose the counter-revolutionary character of the so-called economic reforms or to engage the political leaders in a genuine debate over the new road which they have embarked upon. But there is plenty of room, plenty of freedom, to deride Marxism, to paint up the face of Western imperialism, to cozy up to the neo-Nazi regime of West Germany, to attack the German Democratic Republic and, it goes without saying, to rehabilitate the symbols of old capitalist Czechoslovakia: Masaryk, Benes & Co.

Of course, because the **political** counter-revolution has not yet succeeded in bringing about the full **social** and **economic** counterrevolution, the full capitalist restoration has not yet been really effected. That is to say, the restorationists are in the seats of political power, but while the property relations are being reversed, they have not yet been fully reversed. It is possible that there might be a temporary leftward reversal under pressure from the Soviet Union and its allies. However, only the revolutionary intervention of the Czech workers from below will bring about any fundamental changes of a truly progressive character.

Role of Soviet bureaucracy

Any analysis that bases itself exclusively on the internal forces in Czechoslovakia without taking into account the role of the Soviet liquidators of Marxism would be completely false and one-sided. It is scarcely possible to believe that the tragic events which are now unfolding

in Czechoslovakia would be taking place were it not for the fact that the Soviet leadership is, in the main, responsible for these very events. It is the Soviet bureaucracy which abandoned Marxist-Leninist principles in the first place and began not only to encourage but to demand a revisionist course in politics and economics from its socialist allies. What has happened is that the Czechoslovak events have gone far beyond what is even safe for the Soviet bureaucracy itself.

The difference between the Czech "reformers" and the Soviet bureaucracy is that the latter is deeply rooted in socialized production, whereas the former are a combination of the old bourgeois intelligentsia and elements of the new technical bureaucracy that have no great stake in the socialized economy. They are akin to the old Czarist intelligentsia that was engrafted upon the new Soviet regime, but later superseded.

The very same reactionary forces which have reared their head in Czechoslovakia and are now confidently marching on the political stage there, are also slowly rising to the surface in the Soviet Union. These forces are a powerful current in the Soviet Union and the bureaucracy has encouraged and nourished them. As in Czechoslovakia only the mass intervention on a truly historic scale of the revolutionary working class can stop the creeping counter-revolution. Only the working class, by taking destiny into its own hands, can sweep it away.

Hard facts about Czechoslovak "reform"

August 1, 1968 -- The quotations and paraphrases given below should supply a factual picture of what the Czechoslovakian reform movement is all about. The only subject that is left out of this survey is that of "democracy" and "freedom," as such. But the material here should give a guideline of concrete facts showing who will benefit and who will suffer from the kind of freedom and democracy the Czech reformers have in mind.

Equality

It is not possible to permanently blunt economic policy by taking from those who work well and giving to those who work badly. Therefore it is necessary to objectivize value relations so that differences in the income situation among enterprises express the real differences in the standard of their work.

Democratization of the economy includes in particular the realization of the independence of enterprises and enterprise groupings and their relative independence of state bodies ... the right and real possibility of different groups of working people and different social groups to formulate and defend their economic interests in creating the economic policy.

- The Action Program -- from the Reform Program of Czechoslovak CP
-

Ota Sik (deputy premier) urged the creation of a realistic price system based on the market, and an end to wage practices that made Czechoslovakia one of the world's most egalitarian nations -- and led to absurdities such that a taxi driver made more money than an architect or a doctor, and workers more than managers.

- *Fortune* magazine, June 1968
-

During 1965, the average pay of administrative employees was only 64.3 percent of workers' pay, whereas salaries of engineers and technicians were only 30 percent higher than workers' pay. (This was in the form of a complaint that the reform movement is now answering.)

- *Techniky Tydenik*, Prague, August 1966
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One of the most frequent opinions concerning the de-leveling campaign (initiated by the "reformers") has been the conviction (of the workers) that "one gives raises to the higher-ups, whereas the workers are left out" (Our emphasis).

- *Rude Pravo*, July 20, 1967
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Since 1966, the average salaries of engineers and technicians increased by 5.2 percent, those of administrative employees by 6.2 percent, whereas wages of workers rose by only 1.4 percent.

- *Rude Pravo*, July 22, 1967
-

They want a much sharper differentiation in wages. They realize that inefficient firms will suffer. ... A high official in the Ministry of Foreign Trade avowed that "a little unemployment would be a good thing."

- Ross Terrill in *New Republic*, May 18, 1968
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From the point of view of the workers, the economic reform seems to be yielding quick payoffs mainly to their superiors while the prospect of ultimate benefits for workers appears remote. Workers have, of course, failed to respond to the deleveling proposals with much enthusiasm.

- Vaclav Holeslawsky, a pro-capitalist professor writing in the magazine *East Europe*

Independence, sovereignty and foreign policy

Cooperation of Czechoslovakia with capitalist countries is not influenced by interference from COMECON (East European and Soviet trade association) as a whole or from individual states.

- Premier Oldrich Cernik, press conference of May 14, 1968

We are examining the possibility of joining the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (both controlled by the U.S. -- Ed).

- Deputy Premier Ota Sik, same press conference, May 14, 1968

One year ago, Prague was telling Western diplomats: "You will be able to meet your colleagues from West Germany in Prague when in your capital we can meet our colleagues from East Germany." But Prague is no longer so solicitous of the interests of East Germany. Last year Czechoslovakia stressed that imminent exchange with West German trade missions would not in itself stimulate the evolution of political ties. But Cernik, now Prime Minister, stated after the arrival in Prague of the Bonn representative that the exchange of trade missions represents "an important step toward the normalization of relations."

- *New Republic*, May 18, 1968

The new Czech leaders wish to make moves in concert with other "small Powers" of Europe, such as Belgium, the Netherlands, and the Scandinavian countries. They will, it will soon become clear, be less eager to aid revolutionary forces and regimes in the Third World. The feeling is strong that the burden has been more than the Czech economy can bear. The fruits, notably in the Cuban case, have been disappointing.

- *New Republic*, May 18, 1968

PRAGUE, June 29 -- An official of the Israeli Foreign Ministry was accorded the better part of page one of a widely read Czechoslovak magazine this week to explain why he thought Prague's attitude toward Israel wrong. ...

The same issue of *Student* also published an open letter to Foreign Minister Jiri Hajek protesting his recent statement that relations with Israel would not be restored until Israel evacuated the occupied territories.

- *New York Times*, June 30, 1968

On April 24, Deputy Foreign Minister Vaclav Pleskot told the United Nations Economic Council for Europe in Geneva:

We think that the objective conditions have entered the stage when the elimination of military blocs is taking on the weight of historical necessity.

- *Rude Pravo*, April 25, 1968

Czechoslovakia hopes to gradually open the Czechoslovak national economy to the influence of the world market.

- same speaker as above.

Dr. Snejdarek, director of the Institute for International Politics and Economics and a major spokesman on German questions, made this extraordinary statement in an interview with the trade union paper, *Prace*:

It would be dangerous for Czechoslovakia not only if West Germany should absorb East Germany, but also vice versa, since the latter would call forth a terrible crisis in Europe.

- *New Republic*, May 18, 1968

The intellectuals

What specifically is involved? Nothing more than the demand for complete rehabilitation of all noncommunists, who have had to suffer for many years.

In a word, I believe that it is no longer acceptable or possible to continue to look at this nation from the point of view of the

February (February, 1948, socialist revolution-Ed.) conflict, which of course applies to both opposing camps at that time. ... Full political and moral recognition of the noncommunist position is by no means a simple matter, and the rights to be regained thereby will not fall from the heavens. ...

- Playwright Vaclav Havel in *Liternarni Listy*, April 4, 1968

Are we experiencing a revolution or a revolt? ...

The possibility of revolt leaves us completely indifferent. We have no reason to be enthusiastic about a change of persons. ... We must liquidate this dictatorship or it will liquidate us.

- Lecture by Prof. Ivan Svitak, School of Philosophy, Charles Univ., Prague, in *Student*, April 10, 1968

Voice of counter-revolution

Dubcek is a figure of transition. His fundamental dilemma is that solutions that are required are not provided for in accepted Marxist dogma. The more effectively the new team tackles outstanding tasks, the more it will contribute to the final disintegration of communist rule.

- Hanus J. Hasek, staff of Radio Free Europe

III

After the Warsaw Pact intervention

Intervention Statement

NEW YORK, August 22, 1968 -- Sam Marcy, chairman of Workers World Party, announced the organization's support of the Warsaw Pact nations' intervention into Czechoslovakia today and made the following statement to the press:

The worst possible thing that could happen in Czechoslovakia would be the triumph of the counter-revolution and the restoration of capitalism. This would inevitably mean open or covert domination by U.S.

imperialism and for the masses a return to the slavery of the past.

The victory of the counter-revolution in Czechoslovakia would encourage all the counter-revolutionary elements of Eastern Europe and those in the Soviet Union as well. It would place in doubt the very existence of the socialist countries, including the Soviet Union, where the forces of reaction were most recently evidenced by the reactionary thesis of Professor Sakharov, who is supported by the same elements who sponsored the Czech counter-revolution.

We would prefer a revival of Leninism in Czechoslovakia and a return to the road of genuine communism, full and complete. But there is no existing revolutionary alternative to the present contending forces in that country.

We do not support the political policies of the Soviet revisionists, because they themselves are responsible for unleashing many of the restorationist forces. But as against the bourgeois counter-revolution, we support the Warsaw Pact intervention under present circumstances.

Counter-revolution, not "reform"

August 22, 1968 -- In evaluating the intervention of Warsaw Pact troops in Czechoslovakia on August 21, it is first necessary to evaluate the situation that led to it. Under the smokescreen of "reform," and to the accompaniment of cheers from the "democratic" imperialists of the West, a counter-revolution has been taking place in that country for at least eight months.

The political basis for restoring the inequalities of the past, speeding up the workers and making organic ties with capitalist countries was laid by the victory of the group led by Alexander Dubcek last January. The economic basis was laid three months later by the proposal to reintroduce the capitalist market particularly the repenetration of the world market into the Czech economy by surrendering the socialist state monopoly of foreign trade and simultaneously inviting foreign monopoly corporations to join in exploiting the Czechoslovak workers.

The profits and privileges of a new capitalist aristocracy such as that of the United States (but on a junior level) were in the offing. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund (both controlled by the U.S.) were approached by the Czech "reformers." New pacts, some of them still secret, were being negotiated with the U.S. satellite, West Germany, an

imperialist state which has never given up its drive to subjugate socialist East Germany and take over the economy of Czechoslovakia, too, along with the rest of East Europe. (It was the dynamic capitalist economy of German imperialism that set Hitler on the road to war, and the same imperialism, minus Hitler, is now attempting to do the same thing "peacefully.")

This has all taken place under the leadership of Alexander Dubcek, who replaced Antonin Novotny as First Secretary of the Communist Party in January, although the tendencies toward capitalist restoration had already existed for years.

The Dubcek group must be described as capitalist restorationist, while the Novotny group, in spite of its revisionist character and its undoubted mismanagement of the economy, was the leadership of a workers' state, with its social roots in the nationalized economy.

Social forces

The movement toward imperialism is unfortunately a mighty one. The plots of capitalist restoration are not mere cloak-and-dagger affairs. They are not restricted to CIA agents and Czech Nazis, even though such gentlemen do play an important role. They are not primarily the actions of little groups of faceless men, but the reassertion of broad capitalist tendencies (which are international) in the workers' state and their legitimization by a new group which has usurped political power.

This group is the political expression of thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of middle class individuals (who have hundreds of thousands of friends and supporters) striving to increase their privileges at the expense of the masses. Since these are the people who are radio announcers, reporters, teachers, lawyers, etc., as well as engineers and administrators, they, as the repositories of Czechoslovak culture, can easily appear to speak in the name of the whole Czechoslovak nation.

(Without the intercession of imperialism and the pressures of the world capitalist market, this group would have been helpless, however.)

The workers, less articulate, not yet raised to full socialist consciousness -- although it was they who made the 1948 revolution in the first place -- have not been able to find their own independent class role in the difficult situation. The misleadership of the past, the falsely posed national question of the present, combine to confuse the workers, and may even force some of them to accept the leadership of the restorationists.

The restorationists want to legalize their stolen privileges and increase them. They have neither the patience, the faith in the abundance of world socialism, nor the will to world revolution required for middle class loyalty to the workers' state. A genuine, popular revolutionary workers' leadership would have held them in line, at least to a very great extent. But as matters stood, they not only got out of line, they took over the government.

With the aid of the capitalist West, they all but completed a "cold" counter-revolution and laid the political basis for a restoration of capitalism, with all capitalism's miseries, inequalities and tendencies to war and depression.

Short road from liberalism to fascism

As in Hungary in 1956, the liberal capitalists of the United States have already begun to tell heart-throbbing stories about idealistic people in Czechoslovakia, spiritually crushed by the Warsaw Pact intervention. These stories are calculated to prove that the struggle is really between "liberalism" and "dictatorship."

But also, as in Hungary, Czechoslovak capitalism provides a slender reed for Czech liberalism. Just as the right-wing Communists and the Social Democrats quickly gave way to the bourgeois Smallholders Party in Hungary and the latter began to step aside for Cardinal Mindszenty and the fascists -- so Czechoslovakia would have gone, and would still go, under Dubcek.

Capitalist liberalism needs stability first of all. It needs a more or less contented middle class, with a powerful and wealthy capitalist class, well able to use bribery on a large scale so as not to have to resort too often to police measures of repression.

This could hardly be the case with Czechoslovakia, especially since the workers would become more and more restless, with layoffs, new wage policies, piece work, etc., etc., and would inevitably begin actions to regain their lost rights.

Czechoslovak capitalist restorationism would thus not have the liberal democratic embroidery that the U.S. capitalists pretend to love so much -- at least not for very long. Its dynamic and its historical logic both point in the direction of ... fascism.

East Germany endangered

The German Democratic Republic, which has stood for two decades against a revival of imperialist Germany's expansion and against the revival of Hitlerism, has been placed in an extremely precarious position by the intrigues of the Czech restorationists with the West German imperialists. The proposed Czechoslovak recognition of West Germany and the increased trade and other relations with it would seriously undercut the GDR (which West Germany does not recognize and is trying to isolate) and greatly strengthen the political position of the West German capitalists over Eastern Europe in general.

This is more important and more fundamental than the plots of a few revanchists for immediate military attack against Czechoslovakia. It is reason for serious alarm about the future military and political situation of the Warsaw Pact countries and is one of the most pressing causes for their present military intervention.

The U.S. press is bleating about the Soviet Army entering Prague and is making the false parallel of Munich, 1938, and Hitler's subsequent invasion of Czechoslovakia. To do this, it has to cover up the fact that it is precisely Hitler's former backers who are now in the process (along with U.S. big business) of trying to make an economic colony out of Czechoslovakia all over again!

In turning their backs on East Germany and welcoming West Germany into their country, the Czech restorationists were in fact as conciliatory to the present German imperialists as many of their bourgeois parents were to Hitler in 1918. This is perfectly well understood in Washington. But since U.S. 1918. This is perfectly well understood in Washington. But since U.S. imperialism has been building up the German neo-Nazis as a bulwark against the Soviet Union (in spite of all their talk about "coexistence"), such a policy on Prague's part is highly desirable in Washington.

The Czech restorationists thus endangered the actual existence of the German Democratic Republic and seriously weakened the whole East European bulwark against the imperialist West.

There are now cries of outrage from the slaughterers of Vietnamese peasants against the armed intervention by the Warsaw Pact countries. The outrage is largely because their neo-Nazi junior partners have had a setback.

Washington's role

The role of U.S. money, capital, culture and diplomacy in Eastern Europe has been far greater than that of West Germany, although it is the latter

country that may profit more directly and economically, at least for the moment, from counter-revolution in Czechoslovakia.

At one time, when Czechoslovakia was truly revolutionary, the U.S. put a tight economic noose around it and led an international boycott campaign against it. The U.S. bankers also froze Czechoslovakian funds which were in the United States at the time of the February 1948 workers' revolution. But during the present counter-revolution all kinds of financial assistance are openly discussed.

For the past year or so, the popular phrase in Washington has been "building bridges to the East." This is a favorite slogan of the strongly anti-communist Johnson himself. The slogan does not refer to coexistence as such, but to imperialist economic penetration of Eastern Europe in particular. The idea of unfreezing the Czech assets here, for example, is part of that "bridge building."

Many trade items have now been taken off the "strategic" list. Discussion on loans and other economic aid has begun. The Voice of America has been toned down to de-emphasize the antagonism of social systems and put the accent on harmonious collaboration. Restorationist trends **inside** the Communist parties were encouraged by the more sophisticated imperialists as the best method of penetrating the East, instead of "liberating" it at tremendous cost.

This bridge-building policy was really the European version of the new China policy that Fulbright tried to launch last year. The idea was to appeal to the revisionists in the Chinese leadership, to appeal to their hunger for privileges and profits, to wean them away from the genuine communism of equality -- from the idea of communes, from the building of the socialist future.

The Chinese people, led by Chairman Mao Tse-tung, defeated this campaign by means of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution. They aimed against privilege and profits and incidentally prevented the U.S.-sponsored counter-revolution.

This was better and more effective than the present military intervention into Czechoslovakia -- because it aroused the masses, clarified the issues and created a popular basis for continuing the historic struggle for world socialism.

But the liberal bourgeoisie in the United States is especially outraged at the Warsaw Pact intervention because they thought they could win by infiltration and subversion ("building bridges") in Eastern Europe what they cannot win by force in Vietnam. Their present hysteria is not only a

calculated new anti-Soviet campaign, but also a roar of pain and frustration that presages the ultimate doom of both their anti-popular wars and their anti-communist maneuvers.

"Democracy" and democracy

It is a monstrous lie to describe any movement that introduces inequalities in wages and salaries -- as the present Czechoslovak "reform" movement does -- as a movement toward democracy.

Only if one accepts the U.S. imperialist definition of democracy as the right of billionaires to be parasites and the right of the people to slave for them can one consider this in any way "democratic."

It is true that the Czech newspapers have been "free" to attack the Soviet Union, and intellectuals have been "free" to demand more Western culture and less sacrifice for the socialist allies and for countries struggling for their liberation.

But there has been little freedom to advocate more socialism, more hostility to U.S. imperialism, more material aid for Vietnam, more workers in the universities, or more intellectuals in the factories. On the contrary, there is a lynch campaign against anyone who advocates such things in Czechoslovakia.

Of course, genuine democratic reforms are always in order. But the kind of reforms that U.S. imperialism applauds in Czechoslovakia as democratic are hardly the kind that would thrill genuine revolutionaries. The democracy of the oppressed differs from the democracy of the oppressor as a Black freedom fighter differs from a cop.

Proletarian democracy is not only desirable; it is mandatory -- for the accomplishment of the socialist transformation of humanity. And it cannot be said that proletarian democracy prevailed or flourished to any great degree under the previous Czechoslovak regime. The point, however, is that the tendency of the Dubcek counter-revolutionaries was and is **away from proletarian democracy**, not toward it.

There is no such thing as abstract democracy for all classes, and there never was. It is true that in the cracks and crevices of bourgeois democracy the proletariat may by diligent and heroic efforts occasionally express its own point of view. But as soon as it oversteps the bounds of safety for the rule of the master class, such "democracy" is always abrogated -- by the police, the National Guard, the clamping down of martial law, or in extreme cases, a military dictatorship.

The word "democracy" is well understood in the United States (except by the more gullible of middle-class intellectuals) to be a synonym for American capitalism and The American Way of Life. And in that sense it is indeed democracy that has been coming to Czechoslovakia. That is why Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon and the most extreme right-wing reactionaries are overjoyed about it.

Only the unrelenting prosecution of the proletarian revolution and the world conquest of power by the proletariat will, by abolishing imperialism, root and branch, institute the true democracy of the masses' unhampered rule, and the true freedom of women and men to do what they want without doing harm to their neighbor.

In the meantime it is not a question of democracy in Czechoslovakia at all. And only dupes and liars can say it is. It is a question of which class is going to prevail, and it is a question of which social direction Eastern Europe will take in the immediate future. The situation in Czechoslovakia is temporary and episodic, with the fundamental classes and basic antagonists only battling in the form of indirect agents, so to speak. But their identity is quite clear upon closer inspection. One only needs to know the difference between capitalism and socialism, between oppressor and oppressed, to understand that Dubcek was really leading the capitalist counter-revolution.

Castro for Warsaw Pact intervention

August 23, 1968 -- Excerpts from Cuban Premier Castro's speech in defense of Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia are given below. In his speech, Premier Castro criticized the Soviet leadership for not giving more aid to defeat the counter-revolution -- in other countries as well as Czechoslovakia. But he did not, as some social democrats contend, give merely "critical support" to the action of the Red Armies.

Right here, I wish to make the first important affirmation: we considered that Czechoslovakia was moving toward a counter-revolutionary situation. Toward capitalism and into the arms of imperialism.

So this defines our first position in relation to the specific fact of the action taken by a group of socialist countries. That is, we consider that it was absolutely necessary, at all cost, in one way or another, to prevent this eventuality from taking place. ...

Discussion of the form is not, in the final analysis, the most fundamental factor. The essential point to be accepted, or not accepted, is whether or not the socialist camp could allow a political situation to develop which

would lead to the breaking away of a socialist country, to its falling into the arms of imperialism. And our point of view is that it is not permissible and that the socialist camp has a right to prevent this in one way or another. I would like to begin by making it clear that we look upon this fact as an essential one. ...

A real liberal fury was unleashed; a whole series of political slogans in favor of the formation of opposition parties began to develop, in favor of open anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist theses, such as the thesis that the Party should cease to play the role which the Party plays within socialist society and begin to play the role there of a guide, supervising some things but, above all, exerting a sort of spiritual leadership. In short, that the reins of power should cease to be in the hands of the Communist Party.

The revision of certain fundamental postulates to the effect that a socialist regime is a transition regime from socialism to communism, a governmental form known as the dictatorship of the proletariat. This means a government where power is wielded in behalf of one class and against the former exploiting classes by virtue of which in a revolutionary process political rights, the right to carry on political activities -- whose objective is precisely to struggle against the essence and the *raison d'etre* of socialism -- cannot be granted to the former exploiters.

A series of slogans began to be put forward and in fact certain measures were taken such as the establishment of the bourgeois "freedom" of the press. This means that the counter-revolution and the exploiters, the very enemies of socialism, were granted the right to speak and write freely against socialism.

As a matter of fact, a process of seizure of the principal information media by the reactionary elements began to develop. As regards foreign policy, a whole series of slogans of open rapprochement toward capitalist concepts and theses and of rapprochement towards the West appeared. ...

On many occasions the imperialists have publicly stated what their policy is in relation to the socialist countries of Eastern Europe. And in Congress, in the press, they always talk about encouraging the liberal tendencies and even about promoting, of making available, some selective economic aid and of using every means of contributing to creating an opposition to socialism there. The imperialists are carrying out a campaign, not only in Czechoslovakia, but in all the countries of Eastern Europe, even in the Soviet Union.

IV

Capitalist restoration in Czechoslovakia would mean imperialism in all East Europe

By Sam Marcy

September 13, 1968 -- In the midst of all the hysteria generated by the imperialist press against the Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia, the State Department's charge that the intervention had "changed the balance of power" in Eastern Europe casts a revealing light on what is really the crux of the problem.

For what this charge about the "change in the balance of power" amounts to is that in the eyes of Washington's planners Czechoslovakia had been marked up in the balance sheet of the world struggle between capitalist and socialist countries as already being on their side, as one of their acquired assets.

The long, drawn-out struggle, waged by the U.S. and allied imperialist countries for the subversion of socialist Czechoslovakia into an imperialist satellite, culminated in the January coup by Dubcek and his collaborators. The imperialists thought they had it made. It was in the bag.

All that was needed was to legitimize the takeover and to bring to the surface the openly counter-revolutionary character of the new regime.

To be sure, Dubcek and company had merely opened the door to it, but it was only a matter of days before full control of the main arteries of life in Czechoslovakia would be in the hands of the open bourgeois restoration. Already one of the new periodicals fittingly called itself Restoration.

The intervention by the Warsaw Pact powers that followed was calculated to roll back the counter-revolution if not to crush it. This drastic measure came late and only time will tell if it was not too late.

The alternatives

Among genuine Communists and Progressives who are sincerely concerned as to whether the military intervention was justified, the issue must first of all be considered in the light of what alternatives were available in the given situation. It would indeed be a fortuitous historical circumstance if as a result of the continued and uninterrupted growth of

revisionist policies in the Czechoslovak CP there had developed a genuine proletarian opposition from below.

Unfortunately such a development did not take place and shows no signs of developing even at this moment. To deny this is to fly in the face of stubborn facts and to distort reality in order to suit pre-conceived political notions.

The choices that were left open were support of the bourgeois counter-revolution or a military intervention led by the Soviet Union, whose leaders are themselves revisionist. So the choice finally narrowed itself down to support of the socialist countries led by the Soviet revisionists.

It is no answer to say that the Soviet leadership itself is responsible for the development of revisionism in Czechoslovakia. Of course they are responsible for its development. But once the Warsaw Pact nations took drastic steps to check revisionism from swiftly degenerating into open counter-revolution, those steps were progressive and could not be opposed on revolutionary grounds.

It should first of all be noted that the intervention was decided upon only as a last resort, and because the situation posed a threat to the very existence of the socialist countries in the Warsaw Pact nations. Here we do not mean a military threat backed by the forces of the U.S. and its Western allies.

The main danger

Of course the socialist countries are always in danger of a military attack by the imperialist powers, but that really was not the main danger so far as the Czechoslovak counter-revolution is concerned. The main and fundamental danger is that it would accelerate the neo-bourgeois restorationist trend in all of the socialist countries and pose an internal danger of a full scale bourgeois counter-revolution in the socialist bloc.

Of course with Czechoslovakia in the imperialist camp the military threat to the Soviet Union from the West would be enormously increased since Czechoslovakia is a gateway to the Soviet Union, especially with a militarized neo-Nazi regime in West Germany.

It is impossible to conceive of the existence of a capitalist Czechoslovakia without the most dangerous repercussions in all the socialist countries, including China. For in the final analysis one of the fundamental tasks of the Cultural Revolution in China was the destruction of the very forces of reaction and restoration which came to a head in Czechoslovakia.

Class character of Soviet state

It is possible to denounce the intervention only if one takes the position that the Soviet Union is in fact a capitalist, or to be more precise, an imperialist state. In such an eventuality a different approach would be necessary.

Almost since the birth of the Soviet Union there have been episodes which have evoked hysterical cries from the bourgeoisie which in turn found echoes in the radical movement, calling for a re-evaluation of the class character of the Soviet Union as a socialist or workers' state.

This was true when Lenin introduced his NEP policy which followed on the heels of the Kronstadt rebellion -- a counterrevolutionary insurrection against the Soviet Union. This was true of the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1920. It was particularly true during the Stalin-Hitler Pact period and the invasion of Finland. And needless to say it was true during the period of the Hungarian counter-revolution. This is not to say that much of the history of the Soviet leadership after the death of Lenin is not characterized by serious errors and grave miscalculations. Nor is it to deny the growth and development of the monstrous bureaucratic caste which feeds on privilege, inequality and the development of material incentive on an ever-increasing scale.

But this is a long way from saying that the Soviet Union is a capitalist state. The private ownership of the basic means of production and the prevalence of a market economy based on private ownership, which characterizes all the capitalist countries, is by no means the driving force of the Soviet economy.

Despite the introduction of Liebermanism and other capitalist techniques which have resulted in spreading economic inequality in the Soviet Union, the fact of the matter is that the basic conquests of the Revolution, such as state ownership of the means of production and the fact that the economy is basically a planned one in spite of many deformations, have preserved the foundations of the Soviet Union as a socialist or workers state. It goes without saying that, as revisionism in politics deepens, the danger to the socialist foundations of the Soviet Union becomes ever greater. This has manifested itself for a long time both at home (in the Soviet Union) and abroad.

Revisionists are not the capitalist class

Those who equate revisionism with capitalist restoration do violence to both fact and theory. Revisionism is merely an ideological current.

Capitalist restoration means a change in the social system. It is a change from one class rule to another.

Some of those who equate revisionism with capitalist restoration unequivocally supported Soviet intervention in Hungary. Was Khrushchev merely a revisionist -- but Brezhnev a capitalist restorationist?

In our view, the difference between Khrushchev and Brezhnev is minimal. They are both revisionists. They are capable of veering leftward or rightward within the same ideological framework but they are both rooted in the planned economic system of the USSR.

As against the Khrushchev-Brezhnev type of revisionism there has been developing for some time an outright counter-revolutionary current which is symbolized by such personalities as Sakharov, whose document as published by the *New York Times* is an open call for the dismantling of the socialist foundations of the USSR.

A victory for the imperialists in Czechoslovakia unquestionably would strengthen this current immensely. Parallel currents of this type would inevitably grow stronger in all socialist countries.

The Warsaw Pact intervention has at least rolled back this reactionary tidal wave, but the long-term strengthening of the socialist foundations in the USSR as well as in other socialist countries can only be accomplished by the proletariat itself. It alone can effectuate the urgently needed substitution of the revisionists with a truly revolutionary Marxist-Leninist leadership.

More information about trends in Czechoslovakia

The economists speak of the excessive equalization of wages, which permits a mechanic or a truck driver to earn more than an engineer or a doctor. ...

To remedy this situation, the economists-under the leadership of Ota Sik -- have been trying to introduce a major reform that would restore the profit incentive, force factories to get rid of their numerous superfluous workers, and stimulate managers to improve the quality of their products.

Harry Schwartz, the *New York Times*, March 31, 1968

The Facts Today

*First six months of Dubcek regime
began the restoration of capitalism*

November 10, 1968 -- Below is a collection of facts as related in the bourgeois press during the first months of the Dubcek government. We print it because of popular request for additional information which we received after the publication of our original "Fact Sheet" in the August 22 (1968) issue of *Workers World*.

On April 11, 1968, just after the ouster of Antonin Novotny and the formation of a "liberal" Cabinet in Prague, a New York Times editorial expressed U.S. imperialism's sympathy for the new brand of "socialism" in Czechoslovakia:

With the induction of the new Cabinet headed by Premier Oldrich Cernik and the publication of the long-awaited 'action program' of the Communist Party, the remarkable peaceful revolution in Czechoslovakia has completed the initial phase of its development. The Novotny gang has been swept from the commanding heights its members once monopolized, and the basic principles for what many Czechs and Slovaks hope will be a new, genuinely democratic road to Socialism have been spelled out ... [T]he framers of the new document wisely sought to guard against Muscovite military or economic pressure by promising to remain in the Soviet bloc. But Prague has now given notice that it expects to exercise genuine sovereignty in this alliance.

The immediate need is for the West, including the United States, to take concrete economic steps that show an understanding of the new Czechoslovakia and that provide meaningful aid now when that aid is most needed.

The *Times* editorial appeared the day after the Dubcek government had released its "action program" for carrying out "liberal" reforms. The program asserts that Czechoslovakia had entered a new stage of development in which "there no longer exist antagonistic classes and the main feature of internal development is becoming the process of rapprochement of all social groups of our society."

It should hardly be necessary to explain that the classless society here referred to -- and so joyously greeted by the imperialist press -- is not the last stage of socialism, but the planned first stage of restored capitalism.

When leaders in the midst of a campaign to reduce wages say, "There no longer exist antagonistic classes," we are not dealing with a theoretical error, but with the monstrous hypocrisy and monumental deceit of capitalism itself!

In this new stage of development, the program continues, "there has been a progressive change in the nature of our intelligentsia, which has become a people's Socialist intelligentsia. ... [There must be a] basic change in existing cadre policy, where for years the aspects of education, qualifications and abilities have been underestimated. ...

"Democratization of the economy," continues the program, "includes in particular the realization of independence of enterprises and enterprise groupings and their relative independence of state bodies, the full and real application of the right of the consumer to determine consumption and his style of living, the right of a free choice of working activity, the right and real possibility of different groups of working people and different social groups to formulate and defend their economic interests in creating the economic policy. ... It is indispensable to adopt the line of gradually drawing the prices of the home and world markets closer together."

Bringing back the capitalist market to end the 'absurdity' of equal wages!

Much of the emphasis of the "action program" is on the economic "reforms" proposed by the "liberal" economist Ota Sik, who was made Deputy Premier after the fall of Novotny. The "reformers" charged that Novotny had "sabotaged" attempts to "reform" the economy, that is, to put it back on a decentralized, market-oriented and profit basis. In September of 1967 Novotny had cut back on decentralizing control of the economy when these "reforms" led to a rapid inflation of 29 percent in wholesale prices.

Nevertheless the privileged groupings which include the intellectuals and professionals who were unhurt by such price rises clamored for further "reforms." *Fortune* magazine of June 1968 put the case of the "democratic-minded" reformers this way:

[Ota Sik] urged the creation of a realistic price system based on the market and an end to wage practices that made Czechoslovakia one of the world's most egalitarian nations -- and led to absurdities such that a taxi driver made more money than an architect or a doctor, and workers more than managers.

After Novotny's fall, the drive to completely dismantle the socialist economy was swift. Following are some of the proposals and programs of the Dubcek regime.

On May 14 Premier Oldrich Cernik and Deputy Premiers Ota Sik and Gustav Husak announced to a press conference in Prague some aspects of the economic reforms. According to the *New York Times* of the following day, they said that "Czechoslovakia would welcome foreign investment in industry." In addition, Ota Sik said that "one of this country's goals ... was achievement of convertibility for Czech currency -- the crown," i.e., convertibility with the currencies of the Western imperialist countries which would facilitate investments by the U.S., West Germany, etc.

According to the *Times* report some of the programs included: reorganization of the economy "to become competitive both domestically and in Western export markets"; "complete decentralization of industry and management, with full autonomy in state enterprises ... to compete in credits and markets"; "free enterprise will be permitted in 'personal services' " in which a private businessman could hire "apprentices"; unprofitable enterprises would not be subsidized (this, Ota Sik admitted would cause "social problems and some unemployment"); "Czechoslovakia would accept Western capital for industrial 'joint ventures' with state enterprises" (it would be up to each enterprise to negotiate with the capitalist companies); and on questioning Ota Sik replied that "this country might consider a relationship with the International Monetary Fund."

The day after these reforms were reported in the *New York Time* of May 15, an editorial appeared in that newspaper chiming in with the charges that Novotny had "sabotaged" a "change to a more market oriented economy." To show their supreme satisfaction with the turn toward capitalism, the editors generously suggested that Congress "extend most-favored-nation tariff privileges to Czechoslovakia" to help batter down the walls of socialism in that country.

In addition, the *Times* suggested that the U.S. return \$20 million in gold which the Nazis stole from Czechoslovakia during the war. Although the sum is insignificant, the alert watchdogs for U.S. finance capital point out that "the political case for reversal of attitude [towards returning the gold] now is overwhelming."

Not so easy to convince workers that speed-up and layoffs are good for them!

If the new "people's Socialist intelligentsia" (as Dubcek's action program put it) were wildly enthusiastic about the return to the inequalities of the

past, the working class remained passive and often hostile to the unfolding reforms.

The *New York Times* of May 18, 1968, reported that Dubcek unquestionably has the support of the urban middle class, intellectuals, journalists, artists and students, but is most vulnerable in relation to the workers and peasants who, they admit, will be hurt by the reforms.

The Dubcek clique was concerned over the fact that Novotny "received thunderous applause" from the workers when he visited the C.K.D. machinery factory in Prague in February. To counter the hostility to the reforms, therefore, the government began to make a concerted effort to win the support of the workers and, as the *Times* of May 29 put it, get them to "swallow the bitter pill of temporary unemployment and social disruption as a price for liberalization."

One Czech writer told the *Times* reporter that "The workers in Ostrava (the center of heavy industry) are not on the whole quite clear about the social demands of democratization. The fight for democracy has been concentrated in intellectual circles. Perhaps the workers have not quite dealt with the problem."

The *Times* article of May 29 further noted: "The new planners contend that the excessive goals for heavy industry must be cut down in favor of consumer goods. But this policy shift may pose a job security threat to the 1,600,000 inhabitants of the Ostrava region, the center of Czechoslovak heavy industry." As one Czech editor said, "As to the intellectual freedom within the framework of threatened jobs, I just don't know."

Reviving the Roman Church -- freedom of worship? No, reinforcement for reaction!

One of the clearest signs of the reaction which took over Czechoslovakia in January was the active support of the "reforms" by the Catholic Church which is notoriously and openly engaged in counter-revolutionary activities in all of Eastern Europe.

On April 17, the *Times* reported that Bishop Frantisek Tomasek, leader of the Czech Roman Catholics, affirmed: "It is now, practically speaking, freedom. Freedom for the word of God, not only for men."

In March, the Church had already handed a set of demands to the Dubcek government.

"The Roman Catholic church demanded today," wrote the *Times* of March 25, "the return of Josef Cardinal Beran, who was forced from his see as

Archbishop of Prague 20 years ago ... Bishop Tomasek made his demand in an appeal for a restoration of religious freedom as part of the broad program of liberalization."

By "religious freedom" the Bishop meant freedom for the Church to organize the masses against "atheistic Communism."

The demands in the letter included: "the rehabilitation of all priests, monks and laymen jailed for performance of religious functions and amnesty for those still in prison, legalization of religious instruction for children, and the removal of obstacles in the way of youths who want to study for the priesthood."

"... The new freedom," reported the *Times* of March 25, "was strikingly illustrated this evening on the state television network when a Catholic priest was interviewed with great frankness and portrayed in an unusually sympathetic light."

On June 22 the *Times* reported that The Most Rev. Josef Hlouch was allowed to return to his diocese in Ceske Budejovice in South Bohemia, 16 years after he was removed from the bishopric in March 1952. (Hlouch is only one of many priests returned to their posts after 1952. (Hlouch is only one of many priests returned to their posts after many years of exile.)

"Three Government officials also attended (his first mass), the Bishop said, and were most courteous."

Bishop Hlouch "shared his place of enforced residence with other prelates, including Josef Cardinal Beran, Archbishop of Prague. ...

"He hopes to make his first trip to Rome in August, to report to Pope Paul VI, after having become reacquainted with his diocese. The Government has assured him permission to travel, the Bishop said."

The link between the counter-revolutionary organizations formed after January and the Catholic Church was made clear in a *Times* article of April 1 which reported on a meeting of Club 231 (see below).

"A Roman Catholic layman called, amid great applause, for the return of Josef Cardinal Beran to his see (in Prague). The prelate is in Rome after many years of house arrest in Czechoslovakia."

**'Reform' was just the polite, lying,
bourgeois word for counter-revolution!**

Ever since the advent of the Dubcek regime in January the U.S. bourgeois press has scarcely been able to hide its delight with the clearly anti-Communist tone of the "liberal reformers." The *New York Time* of January 20, 1968, posed the following rhetorical question:

The great unanswered question in Prague this week is why the government-controlled television network devoted a full hour to a documentary on the Petschek family.

The Petscheks were, from the end of the 19th century until the late nineteen-thirties, the equivalent of the Rockefellers here. They sold most of their interests-their fortune was based on mining and banking -- and went to the United States just before the Nazis took over in 1938.

If the TV producers of the post-January counter-revolution were busy glorifying a big capitalist, the journalists and writers were equally busy bringing back to life the bourgeois "father of Czechoslovakia," Thomas G. Masaryk. On March 18, the *New York Times* ran an article headlined, "Masaryk's Grave Is a Shrine Again."

On Sept. 24, 1967, the *New York Times* reported:

Mr. Masaryk, whose name has been almost totally absent from the pages of the Czech press except in a derogatory context, was paid a warm tribute Sept. 14, the anniversary of his death. An article on the front page of *Literarni Noviny* praised his contribution to the nation, dismissed the fact that he was anti-Communist as irrelevant, and contrasted his human values with the lack of values to be found nowadays in Czechoslovakia.

On May 19, 1968, the *Times* ran the following quote from a history professor, Bohumil Cerny on Masaryk:

After 300 years of Austro-Hungarian suppression, Masaryk was the first and only man to realize what had to be done to make a state. A towering figure, humane, a philosopher who knew his Plato, a cosmopolitan in the best sense. Our youth worships him. ...

On March 10, 1968, the *Times* wrote:

Communists and non-Communists here raised the possibility today of peaceful changes that could substantially weaken the Communist Party's power

monopoly in Czechoslovakia. The Socialist Party ... published a resolution calling for different political parties to be allowed to try to win support.

By April, several counter-revolutionary organizations had been formed. On March 31, reported the *Times* of the next day, 3,000 men and women met to found Club 231. The members, revealed the *Times*, "were the political elite of Czechoslovak democracy, Socialists and Liberal Democrats, united in their support for Thomas G. Masaryk, the founder of Czechoslovakia, and his successor as President, Eduard Benes.

"They were arrested mainly in 1948 and 1949, tried on charges of treason and espionage, and sentenced to long prison terms." (Note: these are not Communist Party members who were imprisoned during the 50's, but opponents of Communism who opposed the workers' dictatorship from its inception in 1948.)

A law professor, Ivan Svitak, who represents another counter-revolutionary organization, the Club of Committed Non-party Members, was reported in the *New York Times* of April 11 as having said, "Democratization never is and never has been the political objective of the new set fighting for power ... the whole Stalinist apparatus remains. 'We must liquidate it or it will liquidate us.' "

On April 28, the *Times* reported that Svitak told the Club for Independent Political Thought, "Today we are a club, tomorrow we are a force, and the day after tomorrow we shall be an equal with the Communists."

'Freedom' from world socialism -- to become a satellite of the United States

Another feature of the Czech "liberalization" which has delighted U.S. imperialism is what the *New York Times* editorial of April 11 called "genuine sovereignty." In practice, the drive for sovereignty within the Warsaw Pact countries has meant a drive toward alliance with the capitalist West.

Three days after Novotny's ouster as First Secretary of the Party on Jan. 5, the *Times* editorial read:

The fact that the unpopularity of Novotny's rigid policy toward West Germany was a significant element in his ouster will also play a role. Inevitably, therefore, this episode must strengthen the independence-minded elements in all Eastern European countries. In addition, it gives new encouragement to the Bonn regime in its

recently stalled efforts to build new bridges to the East against the frantic opposition of Walter Ulbricht, who must be one of the chief mourners at Novotny's political demise.

Within two weeks of the January takeover, the *Times* of Jan. 21 reported: "The arrival this week of the advance party of a West German trade mission represents a significant weakening of the 'Iron Triangle,' the unofficial anti-Bonn alliance linking East Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia." In the "hopes of obtaining long-term Western loans," the *Times* continues, Czechoslovakia sees West Germany "as the most logical source of such credit."

The drive for "independence" went so far that at a student meeting March 21, even the very popular "liberal" leader, Josef Smrkovsky, was jeered and booed for defending the alliance with the Soviet Union.

One of the first tasks of the new "independent" Czech leaders, hinted the *Times* the day of Novotny's fall, was to cut international assistance to the working class movement. The economic crises, it was held, were due to the fact that "with Mr. Novotny's tacit approval the Czechoslovaks began fulfilling many of the Soviet Union's commitments of food and weapons to Cuba and several undeveloped countries." (In other words, break with the USSR on the most reactionary basis possible.)

Aug. 11, the *Times* wrote: "Influential Czechs have indicated that they want to reassess the foreign assistance this country has generously been giving to regimes and movements abroad, and put their support on an economic rather than an ideological basis." (A thinly veiled way of suggesting withdrawal of aid to liberation struggles around the world!)

To facilitate the rapprochement with imperialism, the Czech party, as reported in the *New York Times* of May 26, "has relinquished its close supervision of the Foreign Ministry." This decision "set the Foreign Ministry free to make foreign policy." The decision also "adds stature to Foreign Minister Jiri Hajek, who is thought eager to improve relations with the West, **including the United States.**"

On May 2, the *New York Times* quoted Robert J. McCloskey of the State Department as saying:

"We are watching with interest and sympathy recent developments in Czechoslovakia, which seem to represent the wishes and needs of the Czechoslovak people."

No doubt to serve the "wishes and needs" of the Czech people, "Pan American Airways reopened its offices in Prague ... with the blessings of

the Czech Government, 18 years after the office was closed under Communist pressure," reported the *Times* of May 21. In fact, to encourage travel from Prague, Pan Am accepts Czech crowns for flights as far as London, the *Times* related.

"The reorientation" of the Czech economy has become a code word for a new orientation towards capitalism and imperialism. On May 13, the *Times* wrote:

Prof. Vaclav Kotyk, a director of the Institute for International Politics and Economics in Prague affirmed that one of Czechoslovakia's major foreign policy goals was to increase cultural trade and political relations with non-Communist countries.

Prof. Kotyk wrote his analysis of East-West relations for the current issue of *The Journal of International Affairs* published biannually by the School of International Affairs of Columbia University. (*Note that this school is virtually a branch of the U.S. State Department*).

May 9, the *Times* revealed:

Underlying the Dubcek leadership's attempts to reorient its foreign trade was the announcement today that Prague had negotiated to buy \$200 million worth of Iranian oil. Czechoslovakia has imported oil almost exclusively from the Soviet Union since 1948. (*Iranian oil is totally U.S.-controlled*).

Who was Masaryk?

*1918 state, led by Masaryk,
founded by U.S. as bulwark against socialism*

November 10, 1968 -- One of the hallmarks of the so-called reform movement has been the revival of the principal figures of the pre-1948 period, such as Thomas Masaryk, his son Jan Masaryk, and Edward Benes as political and national heroes. Furthermore, these developments take place within the context of the glorification of the first republic of Czechoslovakia founded in 1918.

The attempt is being made to transfer to the first republic and its president, Thomas Masaryk, the aura of independence in the revolutionary context of the independence of oppressed countries of Asia, Africa and Latin

America today. By extension, Masaryk is held up as a national liberation leader.

In view of this fact, it is both worthwhile and necessary to take a concrete look at the Czechoslovak Republic of 1918, at its leaders, its relationship to imperialism, and its relationship to the oppressed, that is, at its class character.

Such an examination should be helpful to determine the class character of those who are trying to create the cult of Masaryk and the adoration of the First Republic -- especially since the champions of the pre-1948 days are not removed from the old regime by even one generation and could not possibly misunderstand the concrete significance of longing for the past.

Czech state carved out at Versailles

The most important fact about the first Republic of Czechoslovakia of 1918, with Masaryk as its President and Benes as Foreign Minister, is that it was founded by the Allied imperialist powers. The Czech state was carved out of Central Europe at Versailles as part of the redivision of the world by the victors.

It is true that both Masaryk and Benes worked hard from the very beginning of World War I to convince the Entente countries that it was in their imperialist interest to create a Czechoslovak state. It is also true that both men worked feverishly to see that the Czech bourgeoisie came away from Versailles with as many concessions and as much booty as they could get from Anglo-French and U.S. imperialism. And it is undeniable that Masaryk used his national prestige to steer the country from the camp of the defeated Austro-Hungarian oppressors directly into the camp of the Western empire builders.

In the above sense, Masaryk and Benes are indeed fathers of Czechoslovakia. But nevertheless the real "founders" of the Czech state, as it was constituted in 1918, were the Bourse bankers and Wall Street.

To tell the complete truth, Masaryk and Benes, the great fathers of Czechoslovakia, never once publicly opposed the Hapsburgs until mid-1915, after the Czech regiments began to surrender *en masse* to the Entente in protest against having to fight for their oppressors in Vienna and Budapest. Until the very outbreak of the war, the "leaders" had always placed their hopes on working out increased privileges for the Czech bourgeoisie within the framework of the monarchy.

Only the war, and the opportunity of making an alliance with Western imperialism, emboldened them to think in terms of a separate republic.

And even then they did not dare declare it in public until having scurried back and forth collecting support from Rome, Paris, London, and Washington. Such were the initial activities of the "fathers" of Czechoslovakia on behalf of the "liberation" of the Slavs.

Real fighting done by Czech workers

This is not to minimize the valiant role which the Czech working class played during that period. In fact, in the actual struggle for liberation, the workers were far ahead of the leaders, and all the declarations against the Hapsburgs, so much celebrated by the "reformers" in Czechoslovakia today, were carried out against a background of workers' demonstrations, strikes, and mutinies against the Austrian and Hungarian armies.

The famous Epiphany Declaration, which amounted to nothing more than all the Czech deputies of the Empire gathering to demand a seat at the robbers' table at Versailles, was carried out under the protection of a general strike in Bohemia.

One hundred fifty thousand workers came out in Prague on January 6, 1918, to support the struggle for national independence against Vienna. And in return the Czech bourgeoisie demanded the right to go to Versailles where they would secure the privileges of exploitation over the workers -- to be guaranteed by French bayonets.

The May 30, 1917, appeal by 222 Czech intellectuals to the Czech deputies to demand national rights for the Czech people was made with the support of 20,000 workers who struck in support of national liberation.

Founded at Pittsburgh; declared in Washington

It is significant that the first written agreement for the establishment of the Czechoslovak state was signed in Pittsburgh at a conference of Czechs and Slovaks in June 1918, after discussions between Masaryk and Woodrow Wilson. Masaryk had just arrived in the U.S. from Russia for discussions with Secretary of State Lansing, Colonel House, the chief strategist of Wilson's imperialism, and Charles R. Crane, a Chicago industrialist and banker who was a fund-raiser for Wilson. Crane had been in Russia on a special mission for Wilson where he also had discussions with Masaryk. They were just "old friends," according to Masaryk.

Masaryk had been to Washington several times before 1918 and was introduced to American high officials by his American wife, Charlotte Garrigue. His son Jan, later to move into the Czech Foreign Office, went to Boston University and spent considerable time in the U.S. before World War I.

The declaration of Czechoslovak independence was made, not in Prague, but in Washington, on October 18, 1918, and was handed out to the press by Masaryk himself. Benes, who spent most of his time during the war organizing the Czech National Council under the guidance of French Foreign Minister Pichon, read a copy of the declaration in Paris.

The same day, Woodrow Wilson announced that he was elaborating the tenth point of his demagogic Fourteen Points to specifically include the right of the Czechoslovaks to deal with the Hapsburgs themselves.

Czech Legions, Kolchak against Bolsheviks

The largesse of U.S. imperialism was not motivated by charity. The first republic was born in the struggle against the Bolshevik revolution and the party of Lenin. While Masaryk was in the United States, the Czech Legions, which he had just helped to organize in Siberia, were fighting side by side with Kolchak's White Guards and overthrowing soviets in the Volga region. The so-called revolt of the Czech Legions was one of the most serious threats to the Soviet Republic and hastened the formation of the Red Army.

Masaryk and Benes had maneuvered to organize the Czech Legion from captured war prisoners in the Allied countries in order to have some forces to put at the disposal of imperialism. The French were spurring them on to put forces in the field against Germany. In fact, a legion of Czechoslovaks was formed in France even before Benes arrived there in 1915.

There were 90,000 Czech troops in Soviet Russia. They were to be transferred to the French front according to a previous agreement with Kerensky. After the Bolshevik revolution, the French decided against the transfer and left them at Vladivostok to fight the Bolsheviks. Masaryk left for the United States.

When, on September 3, 1918, Lansing wrote a letter to Benes in Paris extending semi-recognition to the "de facto government thus recognized for the purpose of waging war against the common enemy..." the last phrase referred more to the Bolsheviks than to the virtually defeated armies of Berlin and Vienna. Similar praise for military service "in the allied cause" came from Pichon and Balfour.

'Liberators' in Prague, oppressors of millions

Another extremely important fact about the great republic so much celebrated by the modern-day Czech counter-revolutionaries is that it was an oppressor state. For services rendered, the imperialist bourgeois powers permitted the Czech bourgeoisie to include within its domain 2.25 million

Slovaks, 500,000 Ruthenians, 80,000 Poles, 700,000 Hungarians, and 3.5 million Germans. Czech borders were established at gunpoint, with Czech Legions under the supervision of French officers.

Benes led the Czech delegation to the Paris peace talks. Pichon sat at his side throughout the talks. No doubt under Wilson's slogan of self-determination for the Czechs, Benes grabbed the Polish railroad junction and coal fields of Teschen. French and Czech troops marched into Hungary to add a large slice to Slovakia. The imperialists had to restrain the voracious Czech "democrats" in Poland and Hungary.

Masaryk and Benes refused to permit the Sudeten Germans to reunite with German Austria, thus laying the foundation for Hitler to become their national "liberator."

"Father of his country" Masaryk's greatest betrayal as an imperialist was the betrayal of the Slovaks who had agreed at the Pittsburgh convention to a federation of equal states, with Slovaks having their own courts, schools, parliament, etc.

Within the Hapsburg empire the Slovaks were super-oppressed by the Magyar aristocracy. When the Czech state was established, it was run entirely by the Czech bourgeoisie from Prague under a centralized state with no national rights whatsoever for the Slovaks.

Revolutionary storm -- Masaryk to the rescue

If the Czech leaders were pawns in post-war imperialist power plays, were tools against the Bolshevik revolution, and were oppressors of national minorities, Masaryk, Benes and Co. were, above all, reactionary with respect to their own working class.

One of the supreme achievements of the Masaryk regime in the eyes of world capitalism was to halt the spread of proletarian revolution in the industrial heartland of the disintegrated Austro-Hungarian empire.

East and Central Europe were swept by revolutionary working class uprisings under the impact of the Russian revolution. Soviets sprang up in Germany, Austria, and Hungary. The bourgeoisie was on the defensive everywhere and had to hide its face behind the right wing of the socialist movement which had turned renegade and had supported the imperialist war.

To the Czech proletariat, independence was supposed to mean independence from misery and exploitation. This was not what the Czech bourgeoisie had in mind, although Masaryk was full of socialist

demagogy. Within six months, the "founding" government, which was openly bourgeois, was discredited and dissolved in favor of the Social Democrats.

Crushing the 1920 General Strike

The Czech working class, deeply inspired by the Bolshevik revolution, carried out strikes and protests all during 1919 and 1920, which culminated in the general strike of December 1920. Factories were seized in industrial centers. Workers declared them socialized and kicked out the managers. Peasants and soldier detachments gave the workers guns.

Revolutionary committees were formed under the leadership of the left socialists who wanted to affiliate with the Third International.

A *New York Times* dispatch from Prague gives a hint of the temper of the struggle:

The danger of a Communist Government throughout the Republic of Czechoslovakia, which twenty-four hours ago appeared to be at an end, has suddenly flared up again. The greatest part of the country is under martial law and Prague is strongly held by troops.

Parliament met this afternoon, the building and the immediate neighborhood being guarded by a large contingent of mounted and unmounted soldiers and police.

When Prime Minister Cerny appeared to make a statement in behalf of the government, Communist Party Deputies shouted "Old Austria Lives" and "Murderer of the Workers!"... (At Brux, five workers were killed and 18 wounded at a Communist rally.)

The most serious aspect of the trouble throughout the country ... has been the passivity of the troops.

At Goeding, for instance, the local force allowed the Communists to seize the Post Office, the railway station and two factories. Another force of military was sent to the town, but it allowed itself to be disarmed. The resident-commandant was so badly assaulted that he lost consciousness and was saved with difficulty from being hanged on a lamp post. Armed with rifles and machine guns, the mob began to plunder until a third military force arrived and occupied one of the factories. It took a fourth

contingent to restore order. Many people were more or less badly wounded.

At Kladno and Brunn, where the Communists are strong, soldiers also refused to act even though they were fired upon...

From other district centers come reports of fighting between troops and strikers.

Fearing that most of the trouble would be encountered in Slovakia, the Government, when the disturbances first broke out, sent most of its troops there. Now they are being rushed into trouble centers in Bohemia, 20,000 men being directed on Kladno, Meinly and Reichenberg. ...

Down with Lenin's "Great Red Crusade"

The "founding fathers" answered the workers' demands with gendarmes. Martial law was declared. Strikers were killed and wounded in struggles at the plants and at demonstrations. Every public building in Prague was occupied by government troops. An attempted march from Kronstadt (in Bohemia) to Prague, in imitation of the Bolshevik march to Petrograd, was put down by troops. Revolutionary committees were smashed and hundreds of leaders arrested. After a week of fighting the uprising was crushed.

The *New York Times* editors gloated over the victory of the Czech government in an editorial of December 26, 1920:

There was another setback for the great Red Crusade recently and at a point of considerable strategic importance. ... A Bolshevik revolution here (in Czechoslovakia) would have unsettled all Central Europe and had serious repercussions everywhere east of the Rhine. ...

The Social Democrats were in control of the government. The workers, under the influence of the left, demanded affiliation of the party (which meant the government) with the Third International. That struggle precipitated the general strike.

"President Masaryk believes in letting such questions be argued out," wrote the *Times*, "and argument was plentiful. The extremists, however, were not content with argument."

The "extremists" were over half the working class, who could hardly live on arguments. They wanted socialism and got bullets instead from "President Masaryk," who understood that:

... a Czech republic was preferable to a proletarian dictatorship. The Czech democracy was left to fight its own battle against international communism and it won. ...

In Czechoslovakia the opposing groups came to a show of strength. ... The failure of the general strike was not only a landmark in the progress of a brilliant young nation, but an event of considerable importance to the history of world Bolshevism.

Bourgeois republic vs. workers' state

The central objective of all ruling classes throughout history has been to obtain the right to exploit the working masses. The rights of social parasitism is hardly a program around which to rally masses of people. Consequently the bourgeoisie, even during its most progressive period, was always obliged to conceal its aims behind vague but popular slogans.

Such slogans and symbols have always been composed of elements which are, on the one hand, socially inspiring to the general population and on the other hand specifically identifiable as slogans of the bourgeoisie as distinct from other contending classes.

If the capitalist class had to resort to such subterfuge even when they were smashing down the walls of monarchy and feudal reaction, how much more necessary is it for them to engage in symbolism and deception in the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution -- and even more so within the confines of a workers' state which has attained its existence by the overthrow of the bosses.

Taken from an abstract point of view, a bourgeois republic is progressive in relation to a feudal monarchy. But in relation to a workers' state, the most democratic bourgeois state is reactionary as far as the interests of the working class and oppressed people are concerned. This is an elementary generalization of Marxist sociology based upon historical experience.

But when you proceed from the abstract to a specific examination of Czechoslovak history, the reactionary meaning of the nationalistic cult of Masaryk and the first Republic, among the learned Czech "liberals" who know history well, becomes vivid.

V

The Myth of 'Peaceful Coexistence'

By Sam Marcy

DECEMBER 6, 1968 -- It is now more than three months since the Warsaw Pact nations intervened in Czechoslovakia. Even if no substantial or abiding change in the internal situation of that country has occurred, it has at least stopped the counter-revolution in its tracks. Its international effects, which have only begun to sink in, are truly enormous.

We merely have to take a glance at the world scene today and it becomes apparent at once that there has taken place a radical alteration in the attitude of the world bourgeoisie and of the U.S. ruling class toward the Soviet Union and its socialist allies. One only has to remind oneself how relations between the Soviet Union and the United States were regarded just a bare few weeks before the intervention to see how different things appear today.

In the *New York Times* of July 8, 1968, five months ago, Harry Schwartz presented a definitive appraisal of Soviet-American relations over a five-year period. His conclusion was that cooperation between the two countries was "now so important and obvious that Communist dogmatists inside and outside the Soviet Union consider the situation a scandal."

However, on November 22, the chief foreign correspondent of the same paper, C. L. Sulzburger, was singing a different tune. Commenting on Soviet-American relations in the light of Czechoslovakia and the mounting crisis in the Mideast, he found that "there is distinct wariness on both sides of the ideological frontier" and, what is far more significant, "a renewed fear of ultimate hot war."

**Deluded imperialists thought that the
counter-revolution was completely safe**

So certain was Harry Schwartz in July about this lasting cooperation between the USSR and the USA that he did not even mention the situation in Czechoslovakia! Since then Czechoslovakia has become a virtual obsession with the U.S. ruling class. The *Times* itself felt obliged to send to Moscow, in addition to its regular reporters, two of its top correspondents, James Reston, the executive editor, and C. L. Sulzburger.

When Schwartz, who is one of its top Soviet analysts, wrote his appraisal, he took it for granted, along with all the others, that the truly scandalous cooperation he had alluded to forestalled any serious move by the Soviet Union to reverse the counter-revolutionary trend in Eastern Europe. Of course, Schwartz, as well as the *Times*, was not alone in his evaluation of Soviet-American relations. Indeed, practically all elements of the ruling class seemed to share the same view, especially in Western Europe.

On the basis of this evaluation they concluded that the Soviet Union would not intervene in Czechoslovakia and that the counterrevolution would not only continue unchecked in Czechoslovakia but perhaps take strong hold in the rest of Eastern Europe and maybe in the Soviet Union as well.

Even the U.S. military, which took a more cautious view of the situation, concurred. For instance, R. Rockingham Gill, the Pentagon's military analyst for Eastern Europe, assured the Czechoslovak neo-restorationists in no uncertain terms that the chances of the Soviet Union intervening were minimal. (See "Czechoslovakia: Will the Soviet Army Intervene?" July 8, 1968, issue of *East Europe*, a CIA-State Department publication.)

After the intervention in Czechoslovakia, it was the top cold war expert and former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, George Kennan, who started beating the war drums. Once again he tried to give the lead in a reappraisal of U.S.-Soviet relations, as he had done in 1947 with his infamous "Mr. X" article in *Foreign Affairs*, in which he laid out a blueprint for U.S. imperialist aggression against the Soviet Union, its allies, and the liberation movements of the world. Only now he sounded so frantic and irrational in his call for the deployment of "a couple of new U.S. troop divisions into Western Europe" to counter the Warsaw Pact nations that he could scarcely be regarded as serious.

While other spokesmen for the imperialist establishment were undoubtedly no less frantic, few could see the possibilities of immediately deploying one or more divisions as Kennan demanded, with the war in Vietnam going as it was and in the midst of an election campaign where the capitalist candidates were outdoing each other in peace demagoguery.

New U.S. war moves: revival of NATO back to the days of John Foster Dulles

Nevertheless, a series of war moves engineered by the U.S. under the cover of NATO have made it abundantly clear that the call by the *New York Times* of September 13 for a "long overdue updating of NATO political and military policy" had the complete backing of the U.S. government and its military establishment.

The *Times* editorial foreshadowed the so-called warning to the Warsaw Pact nations issued by the NATO Council of Ministers which was held a month later on November 16. In a saber-rattling communique, dictated no doubt by the Pentagon, the Council said: "Any Soviet intervention directly or indirectly affecting the situation in Europe or in the Mediterranean would create an international crisis with grave consequences."

This is a return to the kind of language that John Foster Dulles used and the kind of language that Gen. Lyman Lemnitzer, the NATO commander, undoubtedly insisted upon. Its effect is to re-assert U.S. hegemony over Europe in both the political and military sense and to proclaim once again that the Mediterranean is still an American lake.

It is also a menacing challenge to the Arab people and is calculated to stem the tide of their ever-rising liberation movement. In a lesser sense, this bellicose pronunciamento is also calculated to shore up the rapidly fading fortunes of the fascist regimes of Portugal (and its beleaguered African empire), Spain and Greece.

It should also be noted that the Warsaw Pact intervention has modified the character of the international situation even in areas which seem far removed from it. Thus, the recent monetary crisis in Western Europe, which reflects the sharpening struggle among the imperialists for markets, for new areas of exploitation, and for more intensified exploitation of older areas, was in part influenced by the intervention.

In a sense the intervention was public notice to the imperialists that the Czechoslovak economy was not "up for grabs" by the imperialists, as was assumed by them following the January coup by the Dubcek group of neo-restorationists. Czechoslovakia had already been looked upon as a lucrative market. Not only the U.S., but Britain, West Germany, France and all the rest of the European capitalist countries eagerly looked forward to getting their slice of the pie. It was a project which the imperialists had conceived and worked upon for a long time, which was at long last to bear some fruit.

Their severe disappointment could not but be reflected in their monetary dealings, which are all too frequently based on rising political anticipations, which are in turn, more often than not, as inflated as their currencies.

U.S.-USSR collaboration limited by basic irreconcilability of two social systems

The new, more aggressive stand of U.S. monopoly capitalism does not necessarily imply a corresponding change in the direction of revolutionary

policy by the Soviet leadership. But it does indicate that there is a limit to the kind of collaboration that the Soviet leaders have accommodated themselves to for so many years in relation to the U.S.

In particular it illustrates how far the Soviet leaders will go in the pursuit of the false and spurious doctrine of peaceful co-existence. They will abandon it only, it seems, when it becomes patently clear to at least some of the most authoritative of the Soviet leaders that its further pursuit will end up in the destruction of the socialist basis of the Soviet Union itself or, at least, become a great danger to it.

That is one of the most important lessons of the Czechoslovak experience, which at this writing is by no means a closed book.

The miscalculation of the bourgeoisie in relation to the Warsaw Pact intervention is based in part on the myth of the military omnipotence of the U.S., a myth which is slowly disintegrating under the impact of the Vietnam war. It is also based in part on the many years of accommodation of the Soviet leadership to the demands and threats of U.S. finance capital.

As a consequence of this, bourgeois scholars, paid and unpaid government advisors and, above all, liberal and revisionist apologists for the status-quo-at-any-price elevated the Soviet leaders' championing of the theory of peaceful coexistence to a permanent and immutable feature of Soviet foreign policy, if not to an eternal category.

The Czechoslovak experience has exploded this reactionary panacea. In their rage, the ideological servants of the bourgeoisie are trying to make up for their bankrupt theory by spewing all their venom against the Soviet Union and conjuring up an image of the Soviet Republic as a new imperialist monster that has now adopted the same designs as the old Czarist empire.

In reality all that has happened is that the Czechoslovak experience has brought to the surface the underlying social and class antagonisms that separate the imperialist from the socialist countries. This has been covered up for too long a time by an overgrowth and predominance of bourgeois ideology, supported by the leaders of the Soviet Union as well as imperialist ideologists.

Can predatory monopolists engage in 'peaceful economic competition?'

One of the basic assumptions in the theory of peaceful co-existence which lies at the core of this ideology is the idea that peaceful economic

competition between the two social systems would undermine, and maybe eventually eliminate, the imperialist drive towards war.

"Let us compete in trade, in commerce. Let us engage in a race to build useful things for peaceful purposes. Let us not engage in a race for armaments!" This was a constant theme of Nikita Khrushchev. His friendship with Cyrus Eaton symbolized this. But this theory is in violent contradiction to the real-life processes which dominate imperialist economics.

In the first place, there is no such thing as trade and commerce under imperialism which is divorced from its predatory politics. Its trade and commerce are completely interwoven and subordinate to the broad political objectives of imperialist finance capital. The use of terror, coercion, blackmail, duress, and even outright assassination to gain a purely economic (and even a narrow economic) end is part of the daily practice and routine of imperialist monopolies.

Also it must not be forgotten that, even at this very late date in its development, monopoly capitalism still controls the major share of the world's resources and technology and exercises political hegemony (the right to exploit and super-exploit the majority of mankind) even at a time when the majority of mankind is in more open rebellion than it has ever been before in its history.

This is a weighty factor if one wants to consider so-called peaceful competition realistically.

According to proponents of the theory of the peaceful competition between the two social systems, the socialist system would win out because it is a superior economic system. Indeed, it is! But the imperialist methods of conducting economic competition with the socialist countries have meant not only blockading and isolating them, but also strangling them economically and boycotting them where possible. At all times the peaceful competition phase of imperialism has been a preparatory period of the military phase of imperialist politics.

The U.S. subjection of Western Europe and the lesson of Czechoslovakia

It is instructive to relate the experience of European imperialist powers with their benefactors and masters, the U.S. economic colossus. This experience illustrates the utter inability of the European monopolists to withstand the daily economic penetrations -- a more fitting phrase would be the daily economic assault -- against the European continent by the U.S. monopolists. In his well-documented book, *The American Challenge*,

J.J. Servan-Schreiber shows how the continent is gradually becoming an economic vassal of the U.S. In the opinion of some it has long been one.

A new book, *The American Takeover of Britain*, by James McMillan and Bernard Harris confirms the same trend. At this moment Servan-Schreiber and many other European economic analysts, scholars and specialists of all sorts are meeting in Princeton, New Jersey, to discuss, among other things, the American economic relations to Europe. In reality Servan-Schreiber and the other liberal well-wishers for a U.S.-European "good partnership" are in Princeton to plead with the U.S. bankers and financiers to slow the U.S. economic take-over of Europe. Their pleading will fall on deaf ears. It is in the nature of the beast to take what he can, and he is only stopped by force.

The "let us compete peacefully" theory as it applied to Czechoslovakia meant in the final analysis opening the gates wide to the imperialist beast and his junior partners. That is the other lesson of the Czechoslovak experience.

Czech banker has a friend at Chase Manhattan

December 23, 1968 -- What have a former director of the Czechoslovak State Bank and a former chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank got in common?

Plenty, it seems. Both were in attendance at a seminar at Princeton last week and their views turned out to be remarkably similar. Dr. Eugene Loeb, who left Prague for the U.S. after Warsaw Pact troops halted the counter-revolution in Czechoslovakia, found little on which to disagree with his old friend, John J. McCloy.

Loeb, who had been given life imprisonment in the early fifties under the Gottwald regime, was one of those who were "rehabilitated" in recent years. He was so well rehabilitated, in fact, that he became director of the state bank and instrumental in many of the economic "reforms" by which the restorationist elements hoped to hand Czechoslovakia back to capitalist domination.

This man, who until a few months ago had immense control over the wealth created by Czech workers and farmers, makes no bones about his sympathies for U.S. imperialism or his disdain for the proletariat. "The proletariat is becoming the regressive force," he told a reporter for the *Newark Evening News* on Dec. 4. "Wealth is not created by the exploitation of men but by the exploitation of nature."

The *Newark News* went on to say: "Eugene Loeb ... asserted the U.S. is closer to the 'ideals' of socialism."

One representative of Wall Street-style socialism, Chase Manhattan's John J McCloy, sat at a nearby table nodding thoughtfully. McCloy tries to keep out of the news, but the reader may remember that he was one of the three top advisers Johnson consulted before resuming the bombing of North Vietnam in the winter of 1965-66. Loeb should find no fault with that since the "socialist" U.S. was only bombing the "regressive" workers of the DRV.

Loeb's associations with McCloy go back to the days before he was imprisoned when he was lobbying to have Czechoslovakia join the Marshall Plan. The U.S. banker met Loeb in Washington where they drew up plans to bring Czechoslovakia into the multi-billion dollar program that has today turned even the proudest imperialists of Western Europe into satellites of the U.S.

John J. McCloy, as High Commissioner of Germany, was an architect of the Marshall Plan and had as his specific assignment pulling Eastern Europe, and especially Czechoslovakia, into the U.S. orbit. The post-war plans of McCloy and his partners failed, at least for the time being, but Dr. Loeb's "rehabilitation" and the subsequent rise to power of this blatant believer in capitalism show how far the schemes of the U.S. big business had progressed before August 21, 1968.

Postscript

Few if any developments during the post World War II period were as deeply influenced by international considerations as the development of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. In Western literature, the CSR is invariably described as a product of the Red Army intervention at the end of the Second World War and the establishment of a Socialist Government there as a mere coup engineered by Moscow. Western imperialism, on the other hand, is cast in the role of a friendly, benevolent and passive observer which played no role at all on its own behalf.

The tremendous role of the Soviet Army in the liberation of Czechoslovakia from the Hitlerite yoke can, of course, never be underestimated. Recent attempts by neo-restorationist Czechoslovak historians to discover, after 20 years, how the U.S. Eighth Army under the rabidly reactionary General Patton had contributed greatly to the liberation are bound to be discredited and cast aside by historians of the future as

crude U.S. propaganda that had temporarily won a foothold in Czechoslovak academic circles during the so-called Dubcek reform.

What is often most obscured in discussions of Czechoslovakia, especially since the attempted counter-revolution, is the early role of the Communist Party. It is important to note that the Czechoslovak Communist Party was never a small, sectarian organization with a narrow and restricted influence. From the very day it was founded in 1921, it was a strong and vital force in the country enjoying a considerable amount of mass influence, not only among the workers, but in other strata of the population as well.

By the late 1920's it had established itself as the leading party of the working class. At no time thereafter was there a Czechoslovak government that did not have to reckon seriously with the Party and its influence.

After the capitulation of Benes and Co, to the demands of Hitler in 1938-39, the Party went underground, and while it sustained some serious losses, it emerged in 1945 as the party of the proletariat. If there is any party that can be said to have won an overwhelming majority of the workers to its side on the European continent at the time, it was the Czechoslovak Party. This highly significant factor of Czechoslovak life is rarely, if ever, acknowledged in Western accounts of modern Czechoslovakia.

With the liberation of the country from the Nazi yoke, a real revolutionary upsurge developed. The crushing of the Nazi forces in the Czechoslovak area, with the help of the Soviet Army which was greeted everywhere in the country as a liberator, reduced the influence of the collaborationist bourgeoisie to minimal proportions and ripened the general populace for a transfer of power from the remnants of the bourgeoisie to the proletariat.

If there was any place in Eastern Europe which beckoned for an easy transition from a capitalist to a socialist government in the true sense of the word, it was Czechoslovakia.

Unfortunately, this is not what happened. What occurred instead was the formation of a capitalist coalition with Benes and Co. in the saddle but with prominent Czechoslovak CP leaders in the cabinet at the end of World War II. Actual class relations remained as of old, with the old ruling class exercising its right of private property in the means of production and the bourgeois order of society generally remaining the same.

This truly extraordinary situation, where the Party and the working class could seize power but, instead, permitted the bourgeoisie to retain it, was not due to any particular weakness of the Party leadership. It arose as a consequence of the relations and agreements between the Soviet Union and its allies, principally the U.S. One of the focal points in the struggle between the Soviet Union and the U.S. arose over the conflicting interpretation of the Yalta Agreement.

Both Washington and London kept insisting that under the terms of the Yalta Agreement the paragraph referring to the "establishment of democratic governments after the war" meant the establishment of bourgeois regimes. Nowhere was this point pressed more than in relation to Czechoslovakia. Stalin, who feared a break with the Western Allies, favored formation of coalition governments in all of Eastern Europe as a form of compromise with the West.

However, the U.S. ruling class saw the coalition governments in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania and elsewhere as a transitional stage to eventual socialist governments and no amount of compromise by Stalin on this aspect of the situation in Eastern Europe satisfied Washington.

One of the fundamental tools of the Truman Administration to reverse the situation in Eastern Europe was the launching of the Marshall Plan.

The principal target, so far as Eastern Europe was concerned, was Czechoslovakia. Once an agreement was obtained to integrate Czechoslovakia into the economic framework of the Marshall Plan, its political ties to the East would be of negligible importance, particularly if a bourgeois coalition government was at the helm. Integration into the Marshall Plan meant integration into the Western capitalist system and economic domination by the U.S.

John J. McCloy, who was High Commissioner for West Germany and also a banker, was in charge of the Eastern European aspect of the Marshall Plan and one of its leading architects. It was he who began the series of both secret and public meetings with Czechoslovak officials, particularly the bourgeois members of the Czech cabinet in charge of economic affairs.

The December 5, 1968, issue of the *New York Times* confirms that John J. McCloy had secretly met in the latter part of 1948 with the then Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade of Czechoslovakia, Dr. Loebl, and laid preliminary plans for Czechoslovakia to be admitted into the Marshall Plan Program.

It was against this background of U.S. economic aggression as well as the previous launching by the U.S. of the anti-communist crusade under the

sign of the Truman Doctrine that Stalin's policy of coalition governments in Eastern Europe became untenable.

The turning point came in February 1948. It was then that the Czechoslovak workers militia, the trade unions, in alliance with many mass organizations which commanded the support of the overwhelming majority of the popular masses, proceeded to dissolve the bourgeois coalition government and institute a new, a socialist government.

Had the masses been urged to use their revolutionary initiative in 1945 and had the party led them consciously toward an insurrectionary road to the seizure of power at that time, the bourgeoisie would have been crushed by the popular struggle of the people. The old state apparatus would have been smashed and the remnants of the old ruling class not only dispossessed, but reduced to insignificance.

Such would have been the classical method of achieving a proletarian revolution. In fact that is the way it basically occurred in Russia, in China, and in Cuba. The creative energy of the masses themselves in destroying the old regime was the surest guarantee that the newly established workers government would have a solid foundation for its existence and further development.

The February Revolution in Czechoslovakia, however, while it was carried out with tremendous popular support, did not proceed with the destruction of the old state apparatus, and left segments of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia relatively free. This singularly important fact was to exercise a tremendous influence in the calculations of the Party in the formulation of policy, and later on was to re-emerge as a strong and abiding danger to the existence of the socialist government.

Aside from any and all considerations of political policy, the continued existence of strong and formidable strata of the old ruling classes, many of them in positions of power and authority, laid the basis for the attempt at counter-revolution in 1968.

-- December 8, 1968